1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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inheriting their stepmothers. Where circumcision is practised a grown woman scorns sex relations with an uncircumcised boy, therefore uncircumcised youths are not potential lovers of their fathers' junior wives; but with the Nyakyusa there is no ceremony to mark the sexual maturity of a male, and adolescent youths are acceptable to young married women of their own age. And not only does the wide difference in the age of men and girls at first marriage allow of a high degree of polygyny, but the very early betrothal of girls (over whom their future husbands have exclusive sexual rights except during the initiation ritual) means that there are very few girls available to the unmarried men. The institution of girls' huts (*isaka*) has disappeared among the Nyakyusa owing to the lack of nubile girls who are not already betrothed, and the period of seclusion at initiation (when betrothed girls are available to men other than their husbands) is short. The contrast with Nguni society, in which girls do not marry until sixteen to twenty-two, and have several years of great sex freedom before marriage[1] is marked. We suggest that it is because unmarried girls are so scarce and lusty bachelors so many, that the seduction of the wives of polygynists is frequent, and homosexual practices are general.[2] Nyakyusa insist that formerly seduction was rare,[3] and possibly the impulse towards it was indeed less strong when girls married rather later and *isaka* existed (*vide supra*, p. 87).

Lastly, the Nyakyusa permit the inheritance of a father's widows by his sons, a practice regarded as improper by certain other peoples (e.g. the Pondo[4]) who practise the levirate. A son is required to treat all his father's wives as 'mothers' while his father and father's full brothers are alive, and intercourse with a father's wife is treated as a heinous offence necessitating special purification; but after the death of the father and his full brothers these same women become wives of their former 'sons'—with the limitation that a man cannot inherit his own mother or her kins-

[1] Hunter, op. cit., pp. 180-6; M. Kohler, *Marriage Customs in Southern Natal*, pp. 10-44; H. Kuper, *An African Aristocracy*, pp. 135-6.

[2] H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 408 (footnote), hints that similar practices exist among the Nyasaland Tonga and elsewhere *before* adolescence ends. The Nyakyusa certainly continue after puberty.

[3] MacKenzie, op. cit., p. 63, states that the acknowledged child of an adulterous union was openly put to death.

[4] Hunter, op. cit., p. 212.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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taking advantage of the credulity of the masses—can be entertained only by those who have acquired no insight into the native mind and its working. It is impossible to maintain that a system, as wide as a continent, and as persistent as the centuries, should be the outcome of an age-long conspiracy to cheat. The human mind does not work in that way. The system is involved in the world-view; it is woven into the mind-texture of the people, and the honesty of the "practitioners" is, in many cases, as indubitable as the faith of the people.

The prayer for rain, for instance, is offered with a simple sincerity, as honest as any petition ever offered in a Christian church. I am not asserting that the prayer brings the rain; nor yet that it does not. Nor do I suppose that the diviner is in touch with fact, when he uses what he considers to be means of getting into communication with the spirits. I am arguing only for the honesty, in a great majority of cases, of the men who do these things. They are men with a conviction.

The diviner usually hands on his knowledge and his office to one of his own family; but an outsider may learn his secrets by paying an ox or a cow. I am not aware that there is any serious attempt to guard the secrets of the profession, though the various drugs used are not made known except to those who are willing to pay the fee. The only form of initiation is the incising of medicines into the arms or wrists of the initiate, and this incision may be renewed should occasion require it.

13:Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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ancestors and of Kyala[17]. At the same time he moved his curved wood to and fro on the ground and when he did so, it indicated a negative answer from the beings invoked. But when he was asked: "Is the guilt for the sickness to be found in the husband of the chief's sister?", he was unable to move his wood as before; he could only stamp it on the ground, and this meant an affirmative reaction of the invoked spirits. Now, therefore, the meeting had reached its aim.

I asked the diviner to tell me how he had acquired his faculty. He explained that (besides the necessary inner disposition) the payment of a fee for the medical preparation was necessary in order to become a diviner[18]. This outfit consisted in a special vaccination by a learned diviner. For this purpose the neophyte was incised by his master on different spots on the upper side of the knuckles, and in these small incisions was rubbed a medical powder. By these means the initiate may be inspired by the prophesying spirits. These influences are then felt by the diviner as a power which directs the movements of his hand in the manner described.

6. Near the hut of the chief's principal wife was a "sacred" banana plant, in the grove opposite to the chief's hut and in the grove with the grave of the chief's father already described. At particular times, when any need demands it, the chief offers a prayer in this place to his ancestors[19]. The sickness of his sister, for instance, was such an occasion for him to address the ancestors. I was invited by the chief to witness this act; but I raised objections, telling him that my presence might perhaps rather cause the anger than the help of his ancestors. In reality, I did not want the chief to stage a theatrical act on my behalf. But the chief rejected my excuses and explained that he would act in the same manner as if I were not present, because he had made up his mind to this prayer. The chief was assisted during this ceremony by Mwainyekule who presented to the chief a calabash of water as he arrived at the banana plant devoted to this purpose. The chief took some mouthfuls of the water and squirted it towards the banana plant. Then he recited the names of his ancestors and begged them to help his sister.

7. During one afternoon, I was told that a ceremony to end the initiation of a (betrothed) girl was going on in a family of the village.

[17] name of the supreme spiritual being.
[18] Cf. Mackenzie, p. 226.
[19] Mackenzie refers that such a place is named "ikiyinje", "the family place of prayer" (pp. 144, 197), but without indication of the locality, as Karonga.